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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly : regional confidence-building measures : activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 2 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the 19th ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held from 14 to 17 May 2003 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo (see annexes I and II).

The meeting was preceded by a seminar, held from 12 to 14 May 2003, on the implementation in Central Africa of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York in July 2001.

On behalf of the current Chairman of the Committee, I attach herewith the report adopted at the conclusion of the meeting (see annexes III and IV).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 67 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fernand **Poukré-Kono**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

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Annex I to the letter dated 2 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the 19th ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

(Brazzaville, 14-17 May 2003)

Introduction

The nineteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 14 to 17 May 2003.

All member States took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Chad.

Representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also participated in the work.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the United Nations Secretary-General, read by the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic, General Lamine Cissé;
- A message from the Secretary-General of ECCAS, read by Ambassador Nelson M. Cosme, Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS, responsible for human integration, peace, security and stability;
- The speech of the current Chairman of the Advisory Committee, H.E. Mr. Abdou Karim Meckassoua, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and la Francophonie of the Central African Republic;
- The inaugural speech was delivered by H.E. Mr. Isidore Mvouba, Minister for Transportation and Privatization, responsible for coordinating Government action.

The opening ceremony also featured a speech by H.E. Rodolphe Adada, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and la Francophonie of the Republic of the Congo.

Conduct of work

I. Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Interim report of the Bureau by its Chairman.
3. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.
4. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa.
5. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.
   (a) Implementation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
   (b) Organization in Gabon of the Biyongho-2003 military peacekeeping exercise;
   (c) Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa;
   (d) Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts;
   (e) Establishment of a subregional parliament.
6. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS.

7. Consideration of the report of the subregional seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

8. Undertaking of a study on the Central African early-warning mechanism.

9. Activities of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report of the nineteenth ministerial meeting.

II. Interim report of the Bureau by its President

The Committee took note of the interim report of the Bureau presented by H.E. Abdou Karim Meckassoua, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and la Francophonie of the Central African Republic.

The Committee paid tribute to the energetic and effective way in which the Bureau had discharged the mandates entrusted to it at the eighteenth ministerial meeting, with regard to the:

- Organization in Brazzaville of the subregional seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;
- Organization of the preparatory meetings for the Biyongho-2003 military exercise;
- Raising of awareness in the countries of the subregion about the need to sign and ratify the Mutual Assistance Pact and the Protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);
- Organization of the nineteenth ministerial meeting.

III. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

Angola

The Committee welcomed the positive development of the situation in Angola. It commended the Angolan Government on its laudable efforts to create conditions that are conducive to national reconciliation and reconstruction, and in particular:

- The signing, on 26 August 2002, by the Angolan Government and UNITA, of the Memorandum of Commitment for the Final Implementation of the Lusaka Protocol;
- The launching of the process of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating into Angolan society ex-combatants of UNITA and the steps taken to provide for their families;
- The formation of a Government of unity and national reconciliation including members of UNITA.

The Committee encouraged the Angolan Government to make the necessary efforts to meet the many challenges still facing the country, and in particular:

- The disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration of all ex-combatants of UNITA;
- The disarmament of the civilian population in order to improve security conditions and consolidate the peace;
- Landmine clearance.

The Committee expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Angola, in particular:

- The existence of a large number of displaced persons facing malnutrition and poor health coverage;
- The precarious living conditions of the population in zones which are difficult to access.

The Committee appealed to the international community to increase aid to the Angolan Government substantially, in order to ease the suffering of its people, who have been victims of war, and to support the reconstruction of the country.

Burundi

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the development of the situation in Burundi, and in particular:

- The signing on 7 October 2002 and 3 December 2002 of ceasefire accords between the Government of Burundi and three rebel groups;
- The return of some rebel leaders to Bujumbura;
- The peaceful political changeover of 30 April 2003 in Burundi, with power passing from President Pierre Buyoya to President Domitien Ndayizeye.

The Committee nevertheless expressed its deep concern at the deterioration of the living conditions of the people of Burundi and the pervasive insecurity caused by the continued attacks against the civilian population and economic infrastructure by armed groups.

It invited the countries of the Central African subregion, particularly those of the Great Lakes subregion, to put pressure on the armed groups to conclude a ceasefire agreement, help the Burundians restore peace through dialogue and reconciliation, and refrain from providing any direct or indirect assistance to the rebels.

The Committee addressed an urgent appeal to all armed movements to immediately cease hostilities and join in the Arusha peace process and in good faith engage in negotiations for a total and early ceasefire.

It urged all the Burundian parties to promote national reconciliation and work towards the return of peace in Burundi in order to permit the full implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi.

The Committee urgently appealed to the international community, and in particular to Burundi's bilateral and multilateral donors, to provide substantial support for the peace efforts and the improvement of the living conditions of the people of Burundi, in particular through the rapid implementation of the commitments made in Paris and Geneva at the donor conferences on Burundi.

Cameroon

The Committee paid tribute to the climate of peace and stability in Cameroon.

It welcomed the efforts made by the Cameroonian Government to:

- Intensify its efforts to fight crime and organized crime;
- Consolidate gains in the areas of human rights and democracy;
- Pursue its campaign against corruption by setting up anti-corruption units within the various ministerial departments;
- Continue to implement the national programme on good governance.

The Committee welcomed the happy outcome of the Bakassi case, with the definitive and irrevocable ruling handed down on 10 October 2002 by the International Court of Justice.

It welcomed the commitments made in turn by the Heads of State of Cameroon and Nigeria to comply strictly with the Court's ruling.

The Committee also welcomed the encouraging progress made by the Tripartite Mixed Commission, under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which was created to implement the ruling of the International Court of Justice. The Committee encourages the United Nations Tripartite Mixed Commission to bring its work to a rapid conclusion in the interest of the peoples of the subregion and of international peace.

Central African Republic

The Committee welcomed the positive actions taken by the new authorities in the Central African Republic and in particular:

- The appointment of a consensus Prime Minister and a Transitional Government comprising the country's various political and social elements;
- The payment of wage arrears to civil servants and the commitment to pay those wages on a regular basis;
- The gradual restoration of security in Bangui and other Central African towns.

It paid tribute to the role played by the forces of the Central African Economic and Monetary

Community (CAEMC) in stabilizing the situation in the Central African Republic and in restoring security to the country.

The Committee expressed its concern about the precariousness of the general security situation and noted with satisfaction the commitment made by the Government of the Central African Republic to make the restoration of security one of its biggest priorities.

The Committee also expressed its concern at the economic and financial difficulties facing the Central African Republic, as well as the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country.

It also deplored the fact that the Central African Republic still lacked a formal cooperation programme with the Bretton Woods Institutions and had received no budgetary assistance since January 2001. It therefore reiterated its urgent appeal to the international community and the Bretton Woods Institutions to provide the Central African Republic with the financial support it needs to resolve its serious financial problems, a sine qua non for peace and development.

The Ministers of member States of ECCAS adopted a statement requesting the international community to provide substantial assistance to the Central African Republic. The statement is attached as an annex to the present report.

Republic of the Congo

After a five-year transition period, the Republic of the Congo returned to institutional normality with the inauguration of President Denis Sassou Nguesso, on 14 August 2002, shortly after the installation of the National Assembly and the Senate. The implementation of the new institutional infrastructure was continued with the installation of the Constitutional Court, as well as departmental and communal Councils.

The Committee welcomed the improvement in the military and security situation, and particularly:

- The reactivation of the ceasefire accords and the cessation of hostilities, of November and December 1999;
- The signing on 17 March 2003 in Brazzaville, by the Representatives of the Government and the last remaining rebel group, of a peace accord under which more than 1,430 ex-combatants left their refuge in the forests of the Pool department;
- The free circulation of persons and goods throughout national territory.

It welcomed the 750,000 euros in financing pledged by the European Union for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of 1,000 ex-combatants. This funding will help consolidate peace and strengthen the country's social fabric, which has been seriously damaged by successive armed conflicts.

The Committee expressed the desire that Congo reach an agreement with the Bretton Woods Institutions in 2003 in order to qualify for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in particular:

- The signing on 30 July 2002 and 6 September 2002 of an accord between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, on the one hand, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, on the other, on the withdrawal of troops of those countries from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The signing on 17 December 2002 of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement by all elements and structures of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue on the sharing of responsibilities, providing in particular for a two-year transition period, followed by the organization of general elections; the cessation of hostilities throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the reestablishment of the authority of the State across the whole territory; national reconciliation; the implementation of new national institutions; and the formation of a restructured and integrated national army;
- The conclusion of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue on 2 April 2003, with the adoption of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement, as well as the Transitional Constitution;
- The promulgation of the Constitution on 5 April 2003 and the inauguration of President Joseph

Kabila on 7 April 2003 as President of the Republic for the transition period;

- The organization on 14 April of the first meeting of the Follow-up Commission on the Global and All-inclusive Agreement;
- The signing, on 15 April 2003, of the Amnesty Decree for acts of war, crimes of a political nature and opinion;
- The arrival in Kinshasa on 27 April 2003 of senior representatives of the Congolese Rally for Democracy (CRD-Goma) to join the Follow-up Commission;
- The establishment of the Ituri Pacification Commission on 19 March 2003.

The Committee expressed its concern about:

- The continued presence of foreign troops on Congolese territory;
- The emergence of political and military alliances;
- The resumption of hostilities in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in Ituri (Bunia), and in North and South Kivu;
- The massacres and other massive violations of human rights in Ituri;
- The fact that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is unable, under its present mandate, to deal effectively with the situation on the ground;
- The deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in particular in the eastern part of the country, due to the continued military activity.

The Committee appealed to all parties to respect fully the relevant Security Council resolutions concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It also appealed to the international community to continue its support for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; to provide substantial assistance to the people affected by the war, as the deterioration in their living conditions was a matter of serious concern; and to respond generously to the worldwide appeal on behalf of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2002 launched by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners. It also requested that all parties take the necessary measures to provide humanitarian organizations with secure and unimpeded access to those in need.

The Committee requested the United Nations Security Council to adjust the current mandate of MONUC in order to take better account of the situation on the ground.

Gabon

The Committee noted with appreciation the climate of peace and political stability in Gabon.

It welcomed the reopening of the Gabonese universities in mid-December 2002 following a year-long strike by teachers demanding improved working conditions.

The Committee noted with satisfaction the measures taken by the Gabonese authorities to fight trans-border trafficking in children and child labour, in particular by strengthening national legislation and establishing an institutional framework able to ensure the specific protection of children against exploitation.

It also noted the concerns of the Gabonese authorities regarding the phenomenon of clandestine immigration and its repercussions in terms of insecurity.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the climate of peace and stability prevailing in Equatorial Guinea. It noted with satisfaction the continuation of the democratic process in the country, as reflected in the peaceful outcome of the recent presidential elections.

It paid tribute to the formation of a Government of national unity with the participation of some opposition political leaders as candidates for the election of 15 December 2002.

The Committee noted the information provided concerning the legislative elections to be held in Equatorial Guinea during the first half of 2004.

Rwanda

The Committee welcomed the prevailing climate of peace and stability in Rwanda.

It welcomed the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo in implementation of the Agreement signed on 30 July 2002 in Pretoria by the Heads of State of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It noted the information provided concerning the organization on 26 May 2003 of a constitutional referendum followed by the legislative and presidential elections that will mark the end of the transition period.

The Committee welcomed the decision of President Kagame, for reasons of justice and in the interest of political unity and national reconciliation, to authorize the temporary release of 25,000 prisoners who confessed to their participation in the genocide.

The Committee hailed the arrest of perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide by some States in the subregion and urgently appealed to the other States of the subregion to do likewise so that those guilty of acts of genocide in Rwanda might be punished.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee noted with interest the information provided concerning the dissolution of the Government by President Fradique de Menezes due to disagreements with the Prime Minister.

It welcomed the formation of a new Government of national unity, composed of all political parties represented in Parliament, and welcomed the gratifying outcome of the parliamentary crisis of January 2003, which brought the President of the Republic and Parliament into conflict.

The Committee took note of the February 2003 meeting of the Joint Commission between Sao Tome and Principe and Nigeria aimed at resolving issues related to the sharing of oil resources located on the maritime border between the two countries.

Chad

The Committee welcomed the continuing democratic process in Chad and the gradual strengthening of the state of law, particularly the implementation of the decentralization process and national strategies to promote good governance and combat poverty.

In the area of internal security, the Committee welcomed the recent period of relative calm, but expressed concern at the phenomenon of roadblocks, the outbreak of conflicts between nomadic herders and farmers, and the persistence of pockets of rebellion.

The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Chadian Government to continue the dialogue with the Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad (MDJT) and the other opposition parties, as reflected in:

- The agreement by around 500 combatants of the armed opposition to join the Government;
- The return to the country of some senior officials, including Colonel Mahamat Garfa, President of the National Resistance Alliance (NRA).

It encouraged the Chadian Head of State, H.E. Idriss Deby, to pursue his dialogue with the various opposition movements.

In the area of foreign relations, the Committee welcomed the end of the crisis between Chad and the Central African Republic, marked by the arrival of the new authorities.

With regard to humanitarian affairs, it expressed its concern at the situation created on the borders with the Central African Republic by the massive influx of Central African refugees and Chadian nationals returning from the Central African Republic.

The Committee therefore appealed to the international community, humanitarian agencies and other partners to provide assistance to the refugees and displaced persons and to provide support for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

IV. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the intensification of actions and initiatives of the member States of ECCAS within the framework of cooperation in security matters, aimed at lessening tensions, combating insecurity in the border areas, and facilitating exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the trans-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and the need to respond to those problems in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended continued cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly

within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee welcomed:

- The summit meeting held in Durban between the Presidents of Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and South Africa, at which Uganda agreed to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo was asked to accelerate the process of disarming and repatriating ex-FAR/Interahamwe troops;
- The signing on 15 January 2003 of a Protocol agreement on peace, stability and security between the Governments of the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, creating the Tripartite Mechanism for Cooperation in Political and Security Matters;
- The organization in Kinshasa from 20 to 22 February 2003 of the extraordinary meeting of the secretariat of the Tripartite Commission on Security between Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo;
- The organization in Malabo from 4 to 8 May 2003 of the fifth meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs (CCPAC) and its conclusions, in particular the transfer to Central Africa of the Committee's Subregional Bureau, the designation of the Ecole nationale supérieure in Yaoundé as the Subregional Centre for Training in Criminal Research, the organization of two joint police operations between Cameroon and Chad and between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon;
- The organization in Sao Tome and Principe on 9 May 2003 of the fourth session of the Sao Tome-Angola Mixed Commission, at which the two countries decided to strengthen cooperation in security matters;
- The organization of the eighth session of the Mixed Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, which considered questions of peace and security;
- The signing of the Tripartite Accord between Angola, Congo and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the repatriation of refugees;
- The arrest and transfer to Arusha by the authorities of the Republic of the Congo of individuals accused of genocide in Rwanda;
- The organization of joint border patrols by the security forces of the Central African countries;
- The coordination meetings between the administrative and military authorities of the border areas of the Republic of Angola and the Republic of the Congo, aimed at lessening tensions between peoples and building confidence;
- The bilateral or multilateral summit meetings on security questions organized by the Central African countries.

The Committee expressed its deep concern at the persistence of organized crime and insecurity in the countries of the subregion, and particularly at the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the intensification of information sharing and the organization of large-scale joint operations to combat this scourge. It recommended effective implementation of the agreement on criminal police cooperation in Central Africa.

Recalling the importance to peace and security in the subregion of the Protocol on COPAX, the Mutual Assistance Pact and the Non-Aggression Pact concluded between the countries of Central Africa, the Committee recommended to the Bureau that it draw the attention of those countries which had not already done so to the need to sign and/or ratify those instruments.

V. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee

A. Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)

The Committee took note of the announcements made by the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, and Chad concerning their impending ratification of the instruments governing COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact.

It asked countries that had not yet done so to take the necessary steps to ratify these legal instruments before the end of 2003 in order to facilitate the rapid implementation of COPAX.

B. Organization in Gabon of the Biyongho-2003 military peacekeeping exercise

The Committee reiterated its commitment to organize, in cooperation with ECCAS, a military peacekeeping exercise involving the armed forces of its member States.

It welcomed the continuation of operations related to the preparation of the military exercise, and in particular the organization of the final planning conference in Libreville from 7 to 13 April 2003.

It took note with satisfaction of the pledges of support given by some donor countries and the contributions already made by some member States. It urged the countries that had not yet paid their contributions to do so as early as possible.

The Committee also welcomed Cameroon's renewed offer to arrange transport for troops from Chad and the Central African Republic taking part in the exercise and the offer by the Republic of the Congo to provide a troop transport plane.

It expressed the wish that other donors pledge their support before the commencement of the exercise.

C. Consideration of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa

The Committee noted with interest the information transmitted by the member States concerning the implementation of the recommendations of this Conference, which was held in Bujumbura in August 2000.

In particular, it welcomed the implementation in several countries of the subregion of a legal and institutional framework for the management of refugees and displaced persons and the efforts made by several Governments in the subregion to encourage their refugee nationals in neighbouring States to return home.

It appealed to the international community, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to provide increased assistance to countries of the subregion facing problems arising from the influx of refugees.

D. Consideration of the implementation of the Decisions and Recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflict in Central Africa

The Committee took note with interest of the information transmitted by member States concerning the implementation of the recommendations of this Conference, which was held in Kinshasa in November 2001.

Recognizing that women and children are the principal victims of armed conflicts and that they play a major role in the quest for solutions to such conflicts, the Committee once again recommended to member States that they should include them in delegations to their various meetings.

In particular, it urged States hosting such meetings to include women and young people in their delegations.

E. Establishment of a subregional parliament

The Committee was informed by ECCAS of the latest progress in this matter.

It appealed to member States of the Committee for the rapid ratification of the protocol on establishing the network of Central African parliamentarians, adopted by the Heads of State of the member countries of ECCAS at the Conference of ECCAS Heads of State and of Government held at Malabo on 17 June 2002.

VI. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the strengthening of relations between the United Nations and ECCAS since the signing in 2000 of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the two Organizations.

It welcomed the information transmitted by the Representative of the current President of ECCAS concerning the actions planned by the United Nations to strengthen cooperation with member countries of ECCAS and their contribution to the promotion of

peace, security, stability and development in the subregion, and in particular:

- The sending in June 2003 of a United Nations inter-agency mission to the Central African countries, in accordance with the Statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2002, in order to promote a global, integrated, resolute and concerted approach to problems of peace, security and development in Central Africa.

The Committee welcomed the initiative of this mission and expressed the wish that its outcomes include the implementation of a Subregional Bureau of the United Nations to support the efforts of all these Agencies and Representatives as well as those of ECCAS regarding peace and security in the subregion.

It asked the ECCAS secretariat to join with the representations of ECCAS countries to the United Nations in preparing the mission.

- The sending, in June 2003, of a Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region in order to support the peace processes in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- The organization of an international conference for peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region.

The Committee appealed to all Central African countries to help organize and present the conference.

VII. Consideration of the report of the subregional seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Committee heard the report of the subregional seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was read by the chairman of the seminar, Ambassador Basile Ikouebe.

The Committee endorsed the concerns and recommendations contained in the report and adopted it as a document of the nineteenth ministerial meeting (see Annex III).

It asked that the report be presented at the First Biennial Meeting of member States to evaluate the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York from 7 to 11 July 2003.

The Committee asked the United Nations to ensure that countries manufacturing small arms and light weapons meet their obligations within the framework of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

VIII. Undertaking of a study on the Early-Warning Mechanism for Central Africa

The Committee reiterated the need to undertake a study to evaluate the costs and modalities of implementing the Early-Warning Mechanism.

The Committee was informed by ECCAS that the terms of reference for the study had been prepared by ECCAS, in cooperation with the European Union, and that the European Union was presently engaged in selecting an individual to carry out the study, which would be considered at the twentieth ministerial meeting.

IX. Activities of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

The Committee took note of the report of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, on its activities.

It welcomed:

- The organization in Libreville in January 2003 of a subregional training workshop on military law;

- The organization of training sessions in December 2002 and January 2003 in Brazzaville

for officials of the Congolese Ministry of Justice and the members of the legal clinic;

- The organization by the Centre of training courses for students, members of human rights organizations and United Nations staff;
- The technical support provided by the Centre to national institutions.

The Committee also noted the support provided by the Centre to the ECCAS secretariat within the framework of efforts to implement the Early-Warning Mechanism for Central Africa (MARAC).

The Committee expressed its concern at the financial difficulties facing the Centre. It also appealed for an increase in the Centre's budget, aimed at enhancing its ability to fulfil its mandate. It also appealed to countries in the subregion to make voluntary contributions toward the financing of the Centre's activities.

X. Other matters

The Committee decided to hold its 20th ministerial meeting at Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on dates to be determined.

The Committee urged member States to make regular contributions to the trust fund intended to finance its activities.

Lastly, the participants welcomed the favourable climate that had prevailed throughout their deliberations and expressed their appreciation to H.E. Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to the Congolese Government and people for the warm welcome and fraternal attentions paid to them during their stay in the Republic of the Congo.

Brazzaville, 17 May 2003

Annex II to the letter dated 2 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement on the Central African Republic

The Ministers and Heads of delegation of the member States of ECCAS, meeting on 16 and 17 May 2003 in Brazzaville, on the occasion of the nineteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa:

Gravely concerned by the prevailing economic and social situation in the Central African Republic,

Bearing in mind the statement of the Security Council of 14 April 2003 on the Central African Republic,

1. Welcome the efforts made by the new Government of the Central African Republic to promote peace, national reconciliation and the economic and social reconstruction of the country;

2. Launch an urgent appeal to the international community, particularly the Bretton Woods Institutions and the development partners of the Central African Republic, to provide considerable assistance to the country, which has been devastated by years of destruction and conflict.

Brazzaville, 17 May 2003

Annex III to the letter dated 2 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Report of the seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, 12-14 May 2003

Introduction

The seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held from 12 to 14 May 2003 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.

The participants were:

- All member States of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad.
- Representatives of the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).
- Representatives of subregional civil society.
- Representatives of donor organizations: China, United States of America, Russian Federation, France, Japan and the European Union.
- Representatives of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Peace-building Support Structure in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- Representatives of international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP), and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

The opening ceremony featured:

- A speech by Mrs. Pamela Maponga, Secretary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa;
- A speech by Ambassador Nelson M. Cosme, Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), responsible for Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability;
- The opening speech of General Pierre Oba, Minister of Security and Police of the Republic of the Congo.

The closing ceremony also featured a speech by General Pierre Oba, Minister of Security and Police of the Republic of the Congo.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations in New York.

I. Conduct of work

A. Adoption of the agenda

The participants adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda for the seminar;

2. Presentation of national reports by the member States of the Committee;

3. Presentation by subregional civil society;

4. Cooperation and international assistance;

5. Evaluation of the Draft Programme of Priority Activities of Central Africa for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;

6. Evaluation and adoption of the seminar report.

B. Presentation of national reports by member States of the Committee

The participants considered with great interest the reports submitted by the different countries.

Burundi

As part of its efforts to fight the trafficking and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, the Government of Burundi has adopted, at the national level, measures requiring various types of support and the commitment of other nations.

Burundi has established a secretariat to coordinate the security and police forces, responsible for monitoring, preventing and combating the illicit trafficking of firearms.

The continuation of the war is hampering efforts to control the illicit circulation of weapons.

The Burundian Government appealed to the international community for financial support to update its legislation; implement its programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups; and acquire the computer technology it needs to ensure improved control and more effective follow-up.

Cameroon

Armed conflicts and political instability on the territories of several of Cameroon's neighbours, the ease with which its borders can be crossed, the failure of policies for the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants or militiamen in some neighbouring countries, combined with the impact of poverty, are the main causes of the illicit circulation of weapons and of organized crime in the country.

Despite the lack of a national commission in charge of efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, concrete actions are being taken on the ground by the security forces.

In order that it might overcome the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations, Cameroon requested technical and financial assistance from the international community.

Central African Republic

The proliferation of firearms, and in particular small arms light weapons, throughout almost the entire territory of the Central African Republic, following the grave events of the period 1996 to 2002, is the main reason for the high level of insecurity that has prevailed - and continues to prevail - in the country.

The Central African Republic is waiting to receive from the international community the financial, technical and material resources it needs to support its efforts to eradicate this phenomenon.

The Government of the Central African Republic has taken measures to combat the illicit circulation of these weapons with the assistance of UNDP and BONUCA, through a national disarmament and reintegration programme, under which 714 weapons were destroyed in June 2002 and 809 illegal gun owners awaiting reintegration were registered.

Republic of the Congo

Between 1993 and 2000, the Republic of the Congo endured three conflicts involving particularly well-armed militia groups.

It is estimated that over the last decade these militia groups have acquired around 74,000 weapons, 24,500 of which were stolen from depots of the country's security forces and 49,500 of which were acquired outside the country.

The actions taken within the framework of efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons include:

- The establishment of a national follow-up committee on the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security

Questions in Central Africa, which serves as a focal point;

- The establishment of a senior commission for the reintegration of ex-combatants;
- The collection and destruction of 11,400 weapons between July 2000 and December 2002, and the provision of reintegration assistance to 8,019 ex-combatants.

An urgent appeal was made to the international community for loans of around 2 to 3 million dollars to finance the disarmament process, which is scheduled to last for one year, and for the collection of an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 weapons.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The problem of the circulation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and its consequences, constitute a real and significant threat to public security.

Within the framework of efforts to combat this scourge, a commission to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons has been established.

Financial and material difficulties are an obstacle to the implementation of the working programme of the commission.

The establishment of a regional bureau to coordinate the activities of countries of the subregion, the establishment of trans-border customs cooperation, the creation of networks for information-sharing by border-control agencies, and the implementation of the working programme of the commission to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons are priority sectors for which the Democratic Republic of the Congo requested international assistance.

Gabon

The Gabonese Government is concerned at the ease with which the country's borders can be crossed, because this situation enables bandits to enter the country in secret.

Locally made weapons are accentuating the illicit circulation and proliferation of weapons.

A national focal point has been established and special investigations units have been established to seize any arms held by organized criminal groups.

Following the example of other ECCAS member States, Gabon requested international assistance to improve its operational capacities. The assistance will focus on techniques for intervention, the identification of supply networks, and the creation of a database, which is necessary for strengthening cooperation between the different States.

Equatorial Guinea

A commission to control the illicit circulation of weapons has been created in Equatorial Guinea, but has not been able to function correctly.

As a result of actions taken by the security forces, and by the army in particular, significant stocks of light weapons have been discovered and a sum of 36 million francs seized from expatriate citizens.

It is not yet known how many weapons were seized or who the perpetrators or accomplices to these criminal activities were, since investigations are still under way.

Rwanda

The Central African subregion has been transformed into a disaster zone by the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

To combat this scourge, the Rwandan authorities have established a national focal point, composed of several ministries which will soon be joined by civil society. The focal point was officially opened in March 2003 with the assistance of the Nairobi Secretariat.

The national focal point has identified the following priority areas:

- Research aimed at gauging the extent of the problem of illicit weapons;
- The training of specialists in the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- The involvement of civil society in efforts to halt proliferation;
- Raising people's awareness of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- The harmonization of national legislation on small arms and light weapons.

Sao Tome and Principe

In view of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in Sao Tome and Principe, and in accordance with the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Government of the country requested the assistance of the United Nations.

A mission of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNRCPDA), which duly visited the country from 22 September to 4 April 2002, highlighted in its report:

- The presence of a stock of expired sea mines, explosives and ammunition;
- The illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, which must be treated with the greatest possible vigilance, even if it may seem marginal in terms of its extent and manifestations.

The mission also noted a glaring lack of the trained personnel and equipment necessary to perform the assigned tasks, as well as the absence of a legal framework governing the question of the holding of arms by civilian populations.

It was therefore recommended that a national commission to combat the proliferation of weapons be set up, that training be provided to the security forces, and that illicit weapons in circulation be collected and destroyed.

A project, which is expected to last 12 months, has been formulated with a view to implementing these actions.

Chad

The ease with which borders can be crossed, the rebellions in some parts of the country, and the failure of initial efforts to demobilize soldiers and ex-combatants are all factors in the proliferation and illicit circulation of weapons in Chad.

National measures taken to combat this scourge include:

- The establishment of a National Ombudsman's Office, specifically responsible for conducting peace missions, both inside and outside the country;
- The drafting of an employment policy aimed at unemployed youths;
- The adoption and implementation of national Good Governance Strategies (GGS) and National Strategies on Poverty Reduction (NSPR).

At the subregional level, it is proposed that mixed cooperation commissions be established with neighbouring States.

The recurrence of conflicts in some regions of the country remains the main obstacle to implementing the Programme of Action.

Chad requested assistance from bilateral and multilateral partners and from the international community in the form of technical equipment for the training of qualified staff, as well as financial aid for the implementation of the new programme for the demobilization and reintegration of soldiers and ex-combatants.

C. Presentation of reports by subregional civil society

The representatives of subregional civil society, speaking in turn, identified a number of problems related to the illicit circulation of weapons. These problems include enlistment by private, undisciplined militia groups, armed robbery, civil war, and armed rebellion. This situation creates insecurity because of the criminal acts involved. Permanent efforts must be made to raise people's awareness of the harmful consequences of the trafficking and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in order to win their support and thereby facilitate the voluntary collection and destruction of light weapons. Under this awareness-raising process, members of civil society could denounce holders of illicit weapons and arms traffickers.

The representatives also requested that training in peace education also be included, in the form of training. This will require the strengthening of the partnership with civil society in the search for solutions to the problem. Women - and, if necessary, children - might denounce those holding illicit weapons (husbands, sons, neighbours, etc.).

Women and children are often the victims of the ravages of the weapons trade, and are sometimes better informed about the existence of hidden weapons. Within this context, civil society is ready to help conduct advocacy and awareness-raising activities among the population on the danger of holding small

arms and light weapons; to disseminate texts, laws and regulations in an effort to change attitudes and behaviours; and to participate actively in any deliberations by any national or subregional structures, in order to eradicate this scourge.

Civil society recommends that it be involved in mechanisms aimed at combating the circulation of small arms and light weapons, such as:

- The collection and destruction of illicitly held weapons with a view to ensuring the security of the people;
- Raising the awareness of legal norms and administrative procedures for seizing and safeguarding small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, subregional civil society is determined to bring its expertise to deliberations on the concerns of Governments in the subregion.

D. Cooperation and international assistance

Under this agenda item, representatives of States and donor agencies and of other international governmental and non-governmental organizations identified the areas in which they were able to pledge support. For example, the United States of America stated that it would provide financial and technical assistance in the management of supplies, the destruction of surplus illegal weapons, and the training of staff in the detection of illicit weapons; and France, Japan and the European Union said that they would provide assistance in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. China and the Russian Federation reaffirmed their support for the efforts of countries in the subregion to combat illicit arms trafficking. The representative of the International Monetary Fund urged countries in a post-conflict situation to include the costs of their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in their budgets before submitting the budgets to the International Monetary Fund.

The representative of the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP) said that the Group would be able to provide specific assistance in the areas of research and the publication of reports. The representative of the Security Studies Institute (SSI) noted that the SSI played an active role in raising the awareness of the people and in the dissemination of information concerning small arms and light weapons.

E. Evaluation of the Draft Programme of Priority Activities of Central Africa for the implementation of th United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

In order to help the countries of the subregion to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Committee Secretariat had requested the services of a consultant, who prepared a subregional plan for the implementation in Central Africa of the said Programme of Action. The draft programme defines the following priority actions, to be applied by the countries of the subregion:

- Establishing a national commission or structure to coordinate policies to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- Updating, strengthening, and publicizing national administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture, and sale of small arms and light weapons;
- Strengthening the capacities of security institutions for the control of small arms and light weapons;
- Promoting transparency in the control of small arms and light weapons by establishing a weapons register and database;
- Promoting the role of civil society in the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- Strengthening trans-border cooperation in efforts to control the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons;
- Harmonizing national laws and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture, and sale of small arms and light weapons.

During the exchanges that followed the presentation of the Draft Programme of Priority Activities, participants made a number of extremely valuable amendments and contributions. At the end of these exchanges, participants adopted the Programme of Priority Activities (see Annex IV).

Annex IV to the letter dated 2 June 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Programme of Priority Activities of Central Africa for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

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Introduction

One of the recommendations of the eighteenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Bangui from 26 to 30 August 2002, was that a subregional seminar be held on the implementation by the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (New York Programme of Action).

Since the formal adoption of the Programme of Action in July 2001 by member States of the United Nations, all subregions of the world have been actively engaged in its implementation. In this regard, the context for the activities of Central African countries is the Bangui Agreement. One of the goals of the Brazzaville seminar is to define a Programme of Priority Activities aimed at combating the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

In order to facilitate the conduct of work, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (Advisory Committee) prepared a Draft Programme of Activities for seminar participants. This programme, which presents a range of concrete, realistic activities that can be implemented by the member States of ECCAS, represents a response to the realities of the subregion, and in particular to the concerns of countries in the subregion regarding their national efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The Programme of Activities adopted at the Brazzaville meeting will constitute the field of action for ECCAS within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The programme's Second Biennial Meeting will be held in July 2005. By that time, ECCAS member States will be expected to have drafted, adopted and implemented a series of concrete actions for the control of small arms and light weapons. They will also be expected to submit to the Biennial Meeting an interim evaluation report on the implementation by States of the subregion of the United Nations Programme of Action.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (Regional Centre), one of whose mandates is to support the efforts and initiatives of African States in the practical aspects of disarmament, was asked to draft the overall framework for a Subregional Programme of Action.

I. The problem of small arms and light weapons in the subregion

For almost a decade, the Central African countries have been at the heart of the internal convulsions that have shaken the African continent. This situation of open and latent conflicts has fuelled the increase in the availability of small arms and light weapons.

In addition to the recurrent conflicts of the subregion, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is attributed to the ease with which national borders can be crossed, the lack of State resources to ensure effective border controls, and the weakness of existing national laws and administrative procedures designed to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In general, it would appear that the proliferation of arms occurs primarily in major urban centres and, due to the phenomenon of "roadblocks", along rural roads.

The weapons seized during control operations carried out by security forces generally prove to be weapons of war, and in particular Kalashnikov rifles. Nevertheless, the proliferation of locally made weapons is a matter of concern to the political and administrative authorities of Central African countries, because these weapons, although locally made, use the same modern ammunition used for modern weapons, and often the same manufacturing techniques. Traditional weapons have been diverted from their original purpose and are increasingly used to commit acts of banditry and criminality. This may be seen as a consequence of their availability and their improved quality.

It is difficult to find reliable statistics concerning the extent and scope of this phenomenon in the subregion. For this reason, the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa is usually described in terms of the consequences of their use.

Due to their relatively low cost, their ease of use, and their durability, these are the weapons most commonly used by the various warring parties. Their availability sustains conflicts, urban crime, and rural crime (in particular through the phenomenon of roadblocks), and constitutes a serious threat to the security of the peoples of Central Africa.

These peoples pay a high price for these conflicts, since it is well known that most victims of such conflicts are civilians. To these civilian victims we can add the flood of refugees and displaced persons, and the massive destruction of basic infrastructures (roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals). The humanitarian consequences of these conflicts inevitably impede the sustainable development of the subregion.

Even though it is well known that small arms and light weapons are not the cause of the instability in Central Africa, their proliferation and widespread availability have increased the level of violence of these conflicts. The resulting culture of violence undermines peace efforts and hampers the economic and social reconstruction of post-conflict societies in the region. Without an appropriate disarmament process, involving the collection and destruction of surplus weapons and the development of programmes aimed at achieving rehabilitation and lasting reconciliation, the consolidation of peace in Central Africa cannot be effective.

II. Initiatives to combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion

Encouraging initiatives have been taken by States of the subregion to combat effectively the illicit circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. They include:

At the international level: The member States of ECCAS participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, which adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (New York Programme of Action).

At the regional level: The New York Conference had been preceded by the ministerial meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held at Bamako from 30 November to 2 December 2000, which adopted a common position on the illicit circulation, proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. This common position, known as the Bamako Declaration, provided the framework for member countries of the OAU (now the African Union, AU) attending the New York Conference.

At the subregional level: In October 1999 member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), meeting In N'djaména as members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, drafted appropriate recommendations at the national and subregional levels to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

National, bilateral and multilateral initiatives have also been taken in the subregion to limit the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. They include:

The strengthening of cooperation in security matters among the Central African countries was given concrete form with the signing of an agreement on criminal police cooperation in Yaoundé (Cameroon) in April 1999. This agreement is a concrete action undertaken by the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs (CCAPC) which is primarily aimed at promoting the sharing of information by police forces, in an effort to reduce criminal activity by armed bandits and those involved in blocking roads;

The fact-finding mission carried out by the Regional Centre in July 2000 in three Central African countries (Chad, Cameroon and the Central African Republic) in an effort to determine the extent and scope of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to identify the needs and concerns of the countries visited;

The establishment in the Republic of the Congo of a committee for the recovery of the weapons distributed randomly among armed private militia groups during the social and political unrest of the

period 1994 to 1997. This disarmament initiative was supported by UNDP which, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), collected almost 10,000 weapons from ex-militiamen and facilitated the socio-economic reintegration of 6,000 ex-combatants. At the official destruction ceremony organized by the Government of the Republic of the Congo on 14 April 2000, one thousand (1,000) weapons were burned;

The 2001 decision of the Gabonese Government to ban the import of weapons into its territory;

On 11 February 2001 the national programme on disarmament, weapons collection and weapons destruction in the Central African Republic was launched by the Government of the Central African Republic, with the support of UNDP, the Bureau of the United Nations in Central Africa (BONUCA), Canada, Germany and Norway. The programme led to the destruction of 700 weapons, on 15 July 2002. This "arms versus development" programme aims, in its first phase, to collect 4,000 small arms and light weapons and provide employment opportunities for 400 people who have surrendered their weapons, and, in its second phase, to collect 6,000 weapons and provide job opportunities for 600 people;

The constitution by UNDP in June 2002 of a small arms and light weapons unit at its office in Nairobi (Kenya), responsible for developing a project to combat small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, benefiting three ECCAS member States: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda.

These initiatives should be more widely publicized in order to give greater visibility to the peace efforts undertaken in Central Africa to combat effectively the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. One of the obstacles to these efforts is the absence of joint initiatives backed by genuine political commitment. Despite the aforementioned initiatives, it would appear that Central Africa lags behind other subregions of the continent, where joint programmes to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have brought encouraging results over the past five years.

In March 1999, southern Africa introduced a subregional mechanism for the control of small arms and light weapons, based on joint measures introduced under the moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

In March 2000 the countries of the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa signed a joint statement, known as the Nairobi Declaration, to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In November 2000 these countries adopted an agenda and programme of action to implement the Declaration. The priorities identified in these various documents include the establishment of a subregional institutional framework for the coordination and implementation of activities by the Nairobi Secretariat; the harmonization of national laws; the strengthening of the capacities of security forces; the exchange of information; and measures to make people aware of the danger of holding illicit weapons.

In southern Africa, the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have since August 2001 been working to draft and adopt a protocol on firearms, ammunition and other related materials, which addresses questions on the revision of national legislation, the strengthening of the capacities of officials responsible for the application of laws and security, the control of weapons held by civilians, the collection and destruction of surplus weapons, the implementation of a weapons-collection programme, and peace education.

III. Programme of Priority Activities of Central Africa for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

Aware of the potential repercussions of poverty and under-development on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and desiring to promote respect for human rights and democratic governance, the culture of peace, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the subregion, member States of ECCAS have pledged to develop a programme of activities to implement the United Nations Programme o Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The programme will be used as the basis for evaluating the implementation, by member States of ECCAS, of the

relevant provisions and recommendations of the New York Programme of Action.

The Programme of Activities of the subregion identifies the following priority areas of activity:

- The implementation of a national commission or structure to coordinate policies aimed at combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- The collection and destruction of weapons;
- The updating, strengthening and harmonization of national laws, regulations and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture, and sale of small arms and light weapons and ammunition;
- The strengthening of the capacities of security institutions in the control of small arms and light weapons;
- The promotion of transparency in the control of small arms and light weapons through the establishment of a weapons register and database;
- The promotion of the role of civil society in efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons;
- The strengthening of trans-border cooperation in the control of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

At the national level

A. The establishment of a national commission or structure to coordinate policies aimed at combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons

The New York Programme of Action (section II, paragraph 4) identified as a priority the establishment, by United Nations States Members, of agencies or bodies to coordinate national efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The creation of a national structure is regarded as indispensable to the harmonization, at the national level, of actions initiated by the institutions responsible for the control of small arms and light weapons.

The essential functions of the national commissions/structures are therefore:

- To draft strategies, policies and programmes to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- To serve as the national focal point for the coordination of activities;
- To make civilians aware of the danger of holding illicit weapons;
- To undertake in-depth research and studies on issues related to small arms and light weapons (e.g. Central African countries might study the local production of firearms);
- To maintain permanent contact with the national structures of other countries and with subregional, regional and international organizations on issues related to small arms and light weapons;
- To implement programmes for the collection and destruction of illegally acquired and surplus weapons;
- To review, strengthen and disseminate national laws and administrative procedures on the holding, use, trade, and manufacture of small arms and light weapons.

The composition and internal operations of the national commission fall under the national sovereignty of each country. However, the national commission should at least include representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Security, Defence and Justice, as well as representatives of organizations of civil society.

It has become apparent that a secretariat is indispensable to the effective functioning of national commissions. Governments can attach the secretariat to any Bureau or Ministry. However, in order to enhance functionality, it is recommended that it be attached to the Office of the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, or Prime Minister.

For reasons of effectiveness, including cost considerations, it is also recommended that the Secretariat not be too large. It should be limited to a Secretary, a basic secretariat infrastructure, and a minimum level of administrative staff.

The Secretariat will be responsible for:

- Drafting the internal operational regulations of the national commission;

- Organizing meetings of the national commission, according to the timetable provided for by internal regulations;
- Coordinating the preparation of documents to be submitted for the approval of the national commission;
- Drafting reports of meetings of the national commission and submitting them to commission members for their approval;
- Preparing the draft national programme of action to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons prior to its submission to the other members of the national commission;
- Mobilizing resources from national and international donors for the implementation of the programme of action;
- Supervising activities carried out under the programme of action and approved by the national commission;
- Maintaining permanent contact with the ECCAS secretariat on issues related to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

B. The collection and destruction of weapons

The collection and destruction of surplus or illicitly acquired weapons is one of the main actions set out in the New York Programme of Action that member States of the United Nations must undertake to reduce the illicit flow of arms and ensure the secure control of legal weapons held by the security and defence forces. For this reason, section II, paragraphs 16, 18 and 19 of the Programme of Action, on national measures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, encourages member States to locate surplus weapons stocks in national arsenals and quickly destroy them, using methods that are effective and environmentally safe.

The Central African region is particularly plagued by the unregulated circulation and illegal holding of small arms and light weapons, and this situation is compounded by the state of conflict that has ravaged some countries in the subregion for a decade. Surplus weapons must therefore be collected and destroyed in order that lasting peace and security can be established in the region. These surplus weapons are generally either surplus weapons from national arsenals, weapons seized and confiscated from illegal owners, or weapons collected during peace operations. Such weapons are not necessary for security purposes or to the maintenance of law and order at the national level.

Consequently, the member States of ECCAS will work to:

- Create a more secure environment, facilitating post-conflict reconstruction as surplus weapons are eliminated through voluntary weapons-collection programmes;
- Reduce arms flows by promoting the destruction of surplus weapons;
- Design and implement programmes for voluntary weapons collection, including amnesties and compensations in kind;
- Formulate weapons-collection programmes in exchange for the financing of development micro-projects. These weapons-collection programmes in targeted zones will help promote national efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The purpose of these weapons-collection programmes is to rejuvenate the social climate in the Central African countries by collecting the maximum number of weapons held illegally by local populations and encouraging socio-economic development backed by small-scale projects in the areas of stockbreeding, handicrafts and agriculture;
- Draft and implement awareness-raising programmes through the local media (radio, television, and newspapers). Appropriate national commissions or structures, working together with civil society, can design awareness-raising strategies emphasizing the dangers of holding small arms and light weapons illegally and the need for those holding weapons to respect national laws, and promoting the voluntary surrendering of weapons. Documentary films, showing the harmful effects of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, could serve as visual aids for such campaigns and encourage the collection of illegally held weapons. The national commissions could also convey their message through television commercials or through television and radio discussions on the problem of small arms and light weapons;

- Design and promote low-cost methods for the destruction of weapons. The procedure most frequently used is to burn the weapons at a predetermined location which is far from residential areas and poses no threat to the immediate environment. This is by far the most cost-effective way for member States to proceed if they wish to avoid delays due to the lack of external funding. International and regional organizations and specialized institutions can be asked by member States to provide the necessary expertise to identify sites for the destruction, verification, and registration of weapons to be destroyed;

- Work with peacekeeping missions to design effective strategies to control weapons during the peace process following an internal or inter-State conflict;

- Increase the involvement of civil society in the collection of small arms and light weapons. By its very nature, civil society is able to facilitate the collection of weapons through information and awareness-raising campaigns on the voluntary surrender of weapons. Through their direct contact with the local people, non-governmental organizations and associations are indispensable partners for State institutions in the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns aimed at reducing the demand for weapons and the illegal holding of small arms and light weapons and at encouraging the voluntary surrender of illegally held weapons.

Operations to destroy small arms and light weapons must be carried out in public in order to raise people's awareness and increase their confidence in the security services. It is generally accepted that a public destruction operation is essentially a symbolic exercise, designed to reassure the population and the international community that the Government concerned desires to act openly. Such operations will in turn encourage the voluntary surrender of weapons held illicitly by civilians who might otherwise harbour suspicions as to the final destination of weapons collected by the security forces.

C. Updating, strengthening and harmonizing national laws, regulations and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture, and sale of small arms and light weapons and ammunition

The question of the strengthening of national laws and administrative procedures is a key element of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in New York in July 2001. Section II, paragraphs 2, 3, 11, 12, and 14, on national measures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, requests United Nations States Members to introduce laws, regulations and administrative procedures allowing effective control over the transportation, production, export, import, transit or retransfer of small arms and light weapons in their areas of jurisdiction. The Programme of Action also requires States to regulate the activity of brokers by adopting laws or procedures, including the registration of brokers, licensing or authorizing brokering transactions as well as the appropriate penalties for all illicit brokering activities performed within the State's jurisdiction and control.

The New York Programme of Action attaches considerable importance to the legal control of the circulation of small arms and light weapons, as it considers that weapons-related transactions must be carried out within a regulatory framework that is appropriate and in accordance with the state of law. Moreover, laws that are coherent, take account of national realities, and are applied at all levels help to control the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

As in other African subregions, the national laws of most ECCAS member countries on the manufacture, import, export and, in particular, the holding of small arms and light weapons date back to the early 1960s, when social conditions and the availability of high-quality small arms and light weapons were very different from today. There is therefore an urgent need to draft legislation that will give legal authorities a flexible and powerful tool with which to control the small arms and light weapons distributed across the national territory and the local manufacture and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

Appropriate legislation must include provisions on the legal holding of weapons for legitimate reasons of self-defence by citizens, and define the types of firearms that may be held by civilians and the conditions for holding and safeguarding these weapons.

The institutions responsible for applying the laws will be involved at every stage of efforts to reduce the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including detection, confiscation, storage, and destruction, as well as the issuing of licences for the import, export, manufacture, use and registration of weapons. In order to combat effectively the illicit trafficking of weapons, strategies must aim to restore and/or boost confidence and to strengthen security, and will require actions to be undertaken at every level.

Furthermore, actions to strengthen the application of national laws and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture and trade of firearms help to encourage:

- The effective establishment of a system for the issuing of import, export and international transit licences;
- The control of activities of intermediaries and brokers.

Strengthening joint actions to combat the trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the subregion requires the harmonization of laws and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture, and sale of small arms and light weapons. The effect of this harmonization process will be to give the subregion a single legal framework for dealing with the illicit activities of arms traffickers and organized criminal groups.

Harmonization requires the drafting of a framework document regulating the transportation, use and sale of arms, which will serve as a reference document to which countries of the subregion can refer within the framework of bilateral and regional operations for the control of small arms and light weapons.

Member States of ECCAS will therefore be encouraged to:

- Revise, update, and strengthen national laws;
- Undertake a systematic study of legal and regulatory instruments on small arms and light weapons in the subregion; such a study could define the terms for the harmonization of different laws;
- Organize a subregional workshop on implementing these measures.

The ECCAS secretariat could help facilitate and coordinate these activities.

Effective application of national laws requires that the laws first be made public. The New York Programme of Action requests States to make public national laws, regulations and procedures influencing efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and submit, on a voluntary basis, to the competent regional and international organizations, and in accordance with their national practices, information on, inter alia: a) small arms and light weapons confiscated or destroyed within their jurisdiction; b) other relevant information, such as illicit trade routes and techniques of acquisition.

The member States of ECCAS will be encouraged to work together with organizations of civil society (non-governmental organizations and youth associations, women and public and private media) to disseminate laws regulating the holding of weapons.

D. Strengthening the capacities of security institutions in the control of small arms and light weapons

The effective fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons requires that structures be strengthened and that the competences of the armed forces and the security forces be improved through training in modern techniques for controlling the flow of arms and applying legislation. The "capacity-strengthening" component of national institutions responsible for the control of small arms and light weapons is an essential part of any strategy to combat their proliferation. Lack of expertise and competence in an area as specific as controlling the flow of small arms and light weapons will clearly undermine the success of national policies in this area. Security forces must therefore be equipped with the material and technical resources needed to implement their strategies to combat the illicit trafficking of weapons, organized criminal groups and "roadblocks".

Capacity-strengthening is also one of the preconditions for the success of weapons-collection

programmes, because it is only when security forces are able to ensure the security of citizens that the latter will be less inclined to use weapons to defend themselves and thus have legitimate reasons to surrender their weapons voluntarily. It is with this in mind that experts of ECCAS States formulated, at the seminar held in N'djamena in October 1999, an appropriate and specific recommendation concerning the need to equip national departments for the control of small arms and light weapons with adequate material and technical capacities. Section III, paragraph 8 of the New York Programme of Action, concerning international cooperation, encourages States to design regional and international programmes to train specialists in the management and security of stocks of small arms and light weapons. States and relevant international and regional organizations able to do so should support such programmes if requested.

Under this capacity-strengthening programme, member States of ECCAS, with the support of appropriate international organizations, shall be responsible for:

- The training of armed security and police forces in modern techniques to control the flow of arms and ammunition, the application of the laws, and the management and securing of arms stocks;
- The training of members of national commissions and of civil society on the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

With the support of international organizations, member States of ECCAS can draft a training programme which will include the following:

- General information on the proliferation of arms and on legal and human rights questions;
- Techniques for making people aware of the danger of holding weapons and publicizing national laws and administrative procedures on holding, using and trading arms;
- Modern peacekeeping techniques, methods for the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons, combating trans-border crime, management of national arsenals, demobilization, the disarmament and social reintegration of ex-combatants, etc.

E. Promoting transparency in the control of small arms and light weapons by establishing a weapons register and database

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is facilitated by the lack of an effective registration system and the absence of well-maintained national records, in most countries of the subregion. This is addressed in section II, paragraphs 9 and 11 of the New York Programme of Action, concerning national measures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, wherein member States are encouraged to:

- Establish and maintain an effective national system of export and import licensing or authorization;
- Ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept for as long as possible on the manufacture, holding and transfer of small arms and light weapons under their jurisdiction. These records should be organized and maintained in such a way as to ensure that accurate information can be retrieved and collated by competent national authorities.

The establishment of national records and a comprehensive register of the transportation, manufacture, export, import and transfer of weapons, as well as those seized from illegal holders, helps ensure transparency in the control of small arms and light weapons. The records and registers must be computerized and accessible at any moment by the security forces, for the purposes of investigation, data verification and the sharing of information with arms-control units of neighbouring countries, as well as with the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) and international organizations.

Very few countries of Sub-Saharan African have access to a reliable computerized system for the centralization of data on small arms and light weapons, and the Central African subregion is no exception in this regard. Moreover, the management and security of arms stocks are matters of genuine concern for most States in the subregion. In order to address these weaknesses, member States of ECCAS are therefore encouraged to:

- Draw up an inventory of arms stocks;
- Strengthen and/or create national records/registers on the flow of arms, to help the

rapid identification and prevention of excessive and destabilizing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons;

- Create a system for the computerized management of small arms and light weapons – that is, a database containing information on the holding, import and export of small arms and light weapons, which will facilitate not only research on the question, but also transparency and the protection against losses, especially those due to robbery or to corruption at weapons-storage facilities;

- Improve the storage and safeguarding of weapons stocks.

F. Promoting the role of civil society in efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons

The proliferation, availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons threaten the security of civilians, communities and nations, and Central Africa is no exception in this regard. Small arms and light weapons are those most commonly used during armed robbery, disputes within or between communities, local conflicts, armed insurrections, rebel actions and terrorism. They are used to protect drug trafficking, smuggling and other, similar crimes. Small arms and light weapons are used during massive violations of human rights, encourage poor governance, facilitate coups d'état, and establish or sustain a general state of terror, insecurity and instability.

The misuse of small arms and light weapons leads to disastrous results, inflicting serious physical and psychological wounds on large sections of the population, forcing millions of people from their homes, condemning several millions of others to live as refugees, breaking up families and communities, and destroying economies and the environment.

Civilians pay a heavy toll for the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and that is why strengthening people's security requires the participation of civil society in the implementation of the national strategy to combat small arms and light weapons. Through the work of non-governmental organizations, community and local leaders, traditional chiefs, and religious leaders, civil society can play a crucial role in raising the awareness of and informing civilian populations about the danger of holding small arms and light weapons. Direct contact between organizations of civil society and local populations is far from insignificant in terms of ensuring the success of the information and awareness-raising policy that national structures would be required to implement in order to combat small arms and light weapons. That is why the composition of appropriate national commissions or structures foresees a role for civil society. At the seminar in N'djaména in October 1999 on the problem of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, experts from member States of ECCAS drafted a recommendation along these lines, with a view to encouraging the involvement of traditional authorities, associations of civil society, and women in particular, in all structures established to combat the proliferation and the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

Civil society must be regarded as a partner of State institutions in the dissemination of national laws and administrative procedures on the transportation, use and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the collection of weapons illegally held by civilians, and the implementation of strategies for strengthening collaboration between civilians and security forces.

Associations and non-governmental organizations can also facilitate the collection and destruction of weapons by:

- Organizing awareness-raising campaigns to persuade civilians to surrender their weapons to the competent authorities;

- Organizing intercommunity meetings between civilian populations from the same community or between border towns on issues related to the peaceful resolution of conflict, the promotion of social dialogue, the search for a consensus on security problems and the voluntary surrender of illegally held small arms and light weapons.

The role civil society can play in facilitating the recovery of illicit arms held by civilian populations is recognized by the New York Programme of Action which, in section II, paragraph 20, on national measures, encourages the drafting and application by member States of programmes to raise the awareness of the population and build confidence regarding the problems posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and consequences. Such programmes should, if necessary, include the public destruction of surplus weapons and the voluntary

surrender of small arms and light weapons, in cooperation with civil society and non-governmental organizations, in order to end the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

In their efforts to combat the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, the countries of ECCAS can draw support from organizations of civil society, in particular by involving them in the following activities:

- Raising the awareness of civilian populations and providing them with information;
- Promoting a culture of peace by organizing intercommunity meetings;
- Disseminating national laws and administrative procedures on the control of small arms and light weapons;
- Establishing an early-warning mechanism, through close cooperation with the security forces, for the detection of potential crisis areas and weapons stockpiles;

However, in view of the wide range of organizations of civil society found within any society, it would also be wise to encourage members of civil society to form alliances or networks to support actions to combat small arms and light weapons. The formation of such networks or alliances responds to the concern to harmonize and coordinate actions of civil society and would present the advantage, for national commissions, of dealing with a single partner, acting on behalf of the non-governmental organizations and associations of civil society involved in promoting security and peace.

Another, equally important area is the provision of adequate training to the entities responsible for the control of small arms and light weapons. Specific training programmes can be designed by civil society with the assistance of the relevant international organizations and institutions.

At the regional level

G. Trans-border cooperation in efforts to combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons

Section II, paragraph 27, of the New York Programme of Action, concerning regional measures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, encourages member States to establish trans-border customs cooperation and set up networks for information-sharing among law enforcement, border and customs control agencies, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons across borders.

Control over the flow of small arms and light weapons is complicated by the ease with which they can be concealed, the ease with which borders can be crossed, and States' lack of resources. This explains the need for increased cooperation between the security forces of countries in the subregion and for permanent information-sharing between those forces. That is why Central African countries have taken initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation in security matters, with the signing of an agreement on criminal police cooperation in Yaoundé (Cameroon) in April 1999. This agreement is a concrete action undertaken by the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs (CCAPC) whose primary objective is to promote the exchange of police information in order to reduce the criminal activities of armed bandits and the phenomenon of roadblocks.

It is equally clear that the success of national measures to control small arms and light weapons requires a peaceful subregional environment that can promote the implementation and strengthening of internal measures. Given how easy it is to cross borders and how hard it is to control vast border zones, cooperation between member States of ECCAS is essential.

Member States will therefore be encouraged to:

- Control borders in order to stop illegal movements of arms (smuggling);
- Organize joint operations on both sides of the border in matters related to the control of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, with the aim of seizing and confiscating illicit arms and tracing traffickers;
- Strengthen and/or implement effective capacities to "police" the transfer and circulation of weapons;
- Install a system for the electronic detection of weapons at border posts;
- Implement an effective legal and regulatory system at entry and exit points;

- Initiate appropriate research on borders and related political and security questions (in particular small arms and light weapons), in order to determine the nature and the seriousness of the problem of the proliferation of weapons and the illicit routes used to circulate them, with a view to formulating appropriate policies;
- Organize training sessions for border officials and customs police in areas such as the control of end-user certificates, the respect for arms embargoes, information sharing, and the use of border-control technologies;
- Request assistance from donor countries regarding modern technologies to support border-control operations.

IV. Strategy for implementing the Programme of Activities

A. Establishment of a small arms and light weapons unit within the ECCAS secretariat

The aforementioned activities can be performed at the national, bilateral and subregional levels through the concerted and harmonized efforts of member States of ECCAS under an institutional framework which would take the form of a specific small arms and light weapons unit within the ECCAS secretariat. In view of the similarity of the problems of ECCAS member States and the vastness of their shared borders, the harmonization of actions to combat small arms and light weapons at the subregional level requires that the ECCAS secretariat be endowed with a unit exclusively concerned with issues related to the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. This unit will be the ideal focal point within the secretariat for the various national commissions. Its role will be to facilitate the harmonization of national strategies to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to implement a subregional plan to monitor the implementation of the New York Programme of Action.

The ECCAS small arms and light weapons unit could thus be responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation by member States of national commissions/structures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- Harmonizing national laws and regulations concerning the transportation, use, and sale of weapons;
- Organizing, together with international organizations, a training workshop on maintaining a database and a weapons register. This workshop is part of efforts to strengthen institutional capacities so that Governments can establish or strengthen their national records, in particular records of illegal arms seized; the management of national stocks and storage infrastructures;
- Encouraging trans-border cooperation among the countries of the subregion by regularly holding periodic consultations for the sharing of information and experiences among national structures for the control of small arms and light weapons, and national and local police forces;
- Collecting, and making available to national commissions, information about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as about policies and solutions proposed around the world to eradicate this scourge;
- Encouraging the access of civil society to information about the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion and organizing, with the support of international organizations, a training workshop on the control of small arms and light weapons, for the benefit of members of civil society;
- Mobilizing resources among bilateral and multilateral donors for subregional and national activities and programmes to combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

B. International assistance, cooperation and mobilization of resources

Section III, paragraphs 6 and 7 of the New York Programme of Action, concerning international cooperation and assistance, provides that member States of ECCAS may request support from other interested States and regional and international organizations to build their capacities in areas including the drafting, strengthening and harmonizing of appropriate laws and regulations, the application of the laws, the management and security of stocks, the training of armed forces and security forces personnel,

and the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

It is clear that, in the absence of an appropriate policy for the mobilization of resources, successful implementation of the priority activities described above cannot be guaranteed. Governments of member States and national commissions will therefore be encouraged to draft projects and programmes according to the priority areas defined, in order to submit them for financing to development partners and to regional and multilateral institutions.

The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, in consultation with the ECCAS secretariat and member States, is requested to transform these activities, as soon as possible, into projects for an initial period of two years; to provide budget estimates for those projects and define their modalities of implementation; and to submit these projects and budget estimates to bilateral and multilateral donors for financing.

The ECCAS secretariat, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will request the services of a consultant to transform the activities identified in the Priority Programme into a project document, including a budget estimate and a timetable for implementation.

However, the mobilization of resources from among external partners can be performed only if the States themselves invest a part of their national budgets in actions to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In carrying out their activities, member States must also seek the active collaboration of civil society and of women's associations in particular.

Annex

Timetable for implementing the Programme of Activities

Activities	*Implementing institutions/offices/agencies*	*Timeline*
Establishing a national commission or structure to coordinate policies aimed at fighting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons	Member States, ECCAS secretariat	Immediate action May 2003-July 2005
The collection and destruction of weapons	National commissions/structures, Civil society	May 2003-July 2005
Updating, strengthening and harmonizing national laws, regulations and administrative procedures on the transportation, use, manufacture and sale of small arms and light weapons	Member States,National commissions, ECCAS secretariat, Civil society	May 2003- July 2005
Strengthening the capacities of security institutions in the control of small arms and light weapons	Member States,ECCAS secretariat	May 2003-July 2005
Promoting transparency in the control of small arms and light weapons by establishing a weapons register and database;	Member States,National commissions,ECCAS secretariat	May 2003-Nov 2004
Promoting the role of civil society in the fight against small arms and light weapons;	Civil society, National commissions	May 2003-July 2005
Strengthening trans-border cooperation in the control of the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons	Member States,ECCAS secretariat,Civil society	May 2003-July 2005